

Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (EYSENIF)

Key Messages

Forum members are asked to: take the paper as a review of the impact the Childcare Reforms have had on the funding for children 2-years-old and under.

1. Introduction/background

- In February 2024 Helen Sanders presented a paper on the Early Years EYSENIF to the Education Funding Forum (EFF).
- The paper highlighted that through the childcare reforms and with the expansion of the Funded Early Learning offer, there would likely be an impact on the demand for EYSENIF.
- There has been an agreement at the EFF to increase the budget line for EYSENIF to allow for this predicted demand.
- The EYSENIF budget has historically overspent.
- It had previously been a requirement to have an EY teacher working with a child for the settings to be able to access the EYSENIF.
- In February 2024, the EFF endorsed the simplified version of the process to access SENIF, meaning no EY Teachers' involvement was needed and the additional funding could be accessed through evidence of need and provision from settings.

2. Current Arrangements

- Since the agreement in February the 0-5 SEND Manager has been absent from work.
- The process for managing the applications for EYSENIF has been applied.
- The process has been overseen by a Head of Service, Service Manager, EY Teacher and led by a SEND Communication and Engagement Project Manager.
- The pressure on this budget has continued and carries a forecast overspend of £40,000 for this financial year.
- The EYSENIF has funded two children under 2-years-old, the applications for under 2s make 1.48% of the applications received between September – November 2024.

3. Feedback

- Settings are finding the process easier to navigate.
- The 'panel' dates that had been set have been replaced by a timely response to each request, which means settings are receiving the funding in a more timely manner and this feels a more secure way of working.
- The process is rigorous for relatively and comparatively small amounts of money.
- The pressure on this budget has continued for children 2-5 years and there haven't been overwhelming numbers of requests for 0-2-year-olds.

4. Recommendations

Forum members are asked to note the content of this paper and consider if there are any recommendations the EFF would like to make.